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Some Difficulties in the Transcription of Oral Narrative

Nora Lewis
University of Pennsylvania

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SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE TRANSCRIPTION OF ORAL NARRATIVE[1]

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Carol Edelsky (1982) maintains that the analysis of recorded speech data actually begins with transcription, the transformation of the data from spoken to written form. As she and others (Ochs 1979; Jansen 1975) have noted, "transcribing data is at once problematic, intuition-producing, and fraught with often unreported yet important decisions" (Edelsky 1982: 384). This paper will describe some of the problems encountered during the transcription of oral narrative, discuss some of the considerations involved in solving those problems and offer suggestions for the transcription of oral narrative.

For this project I collected tape recordings of my grandfather, Dell Adams, talking about his life. My grandfather was born in 1905 in the mountainous and then sparsely settled area of Chapmanville, Logan County, West Virginia. Although he did attend school through about the fifth or sixth grade and can read and write a little, in his speech and lifestyle he exhibits many of the qualities that Ong describes as characteristic of "primary orality"[2] (1982, ch. 3).

I told my grandfather that I wanted to get on tape for posterity some of the stories he likes to tell about his family and "the old days" when he was growing up in West Virginia. (He currently lives in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, where he has resided for the past fifteen years or so). Because he loves to talk about the changes he has seen in his life and also loves to make tapes (making audio recordings for himself and others is one of his hobbies), I had no trouble in getting two hours' worth of material on tape in one evening.

From the two hours of narrative, I selected three passages for transcription, each of which relates to a single theme or topic. Although related to what precedes and follows them on the tape, the passages had fairly well marked topic boundaries, making it possible to separate them from the surrounding discourse.

The passages are reproduced in Appendices A, B and C. Each passage was transcribed in a slightly different manner, as will be explained in the following discussion.

The transcription process is "problematic" precisely because it involves making countless decisions regarding the data in question. The two major kinds of decisions a researcher must make are:

1) what features or aspects of the speech to represent in a written transcript; and
2) how to represent those features in writing or print.

The decisions one makes during transcription are presumably influenced by considerations regarding the purpose or intended use of the transcript, the nature of the eventual readers of the transcript, interests of the transcriber and characteristics of the data itself.

Practically speaking, it is impossible to completely capture all that is going on in spoken discourse in a written transcript[3]. Nor would we necessarily want to try to represent everything that is happening in spoken communication: the result would be a transcript that would be very difficult to read and even more difficult to analyze. As Ochs (1979: 44) maintains, "a more useful transcript is a more selective one".

Thus, the first problem the transcriptionist/researcher faces is deciding what and how much to represent in the transcript. How closely does one follow the verbal behavior on the tape? Does one include false starts, interruptions, repetitions, overlapping speech? Or does one edit so as to provide a more flowing, more readable text? Should the researcher attempt to capture the dialect or accent of speakers, or is the translation of dialect to "standard" language forms considered more appropriate to a written mode? What

paralinguistic features should be marked in the transcript: stress, intonation, speed and rhythm of speech, pauses, changes in pitch and volume, behaviors such as laughing, crying, sighing, and coughing? Then there is the nonverbal activity that may have been captured on videotape or in notes taken during the recording of the data. Should the occurrence of gestures and facial expressions be noted, for example? And how much, if any, description should be provided of the context for the recorded data, the environment or setting in which the data were gathered and the background leading up to the situation that was actually recorded? Does one note audience presence and response?

The answers to these questions will depend, as has been noted above, on the use and audience for which the transcript is intended. The decisions made for a popular collection of folk narratives, such as the Foxfire publications, will differ greatly from those made for a linguist's research into discourse structure and rhetorical convention, such as Hymes' work on American Indian narratives (Hymes 1977).

The Foxfire publications, for example, are intended for the general reading public, although they may also be of interest to scholars studying folklore and folklife. Although the Foxfire editors attempt to faithfully preserve the content and information contained in the oral narratives they collect, they also do a fair amount of editing, consolidation and reorganization of the oral material to put it into a form that is more readable, i.e. closer to the organization and style of a written narrative. The average Foxfire reader probably does not need to see, and, in fact, would be put off by, the oral "text" in a nearly verbatim transcription. The editors of these publications, do, however, try to capture their subjects' dialects in written form. Of course, this representation is not an exact phonetic transcription of the speech, as most readers would be unable to decipher such a text (and most Foxfire researchers unable to produce it). Rather, the editors rely on more of a "phonics" approach to the spelling of dialect forms in order to give readers "the flavor" of the storyteller's speech (Page & Wigginton 1983: xxxvii).

In one sense, I find the Foxfire approach to oral narrative transcription very successful. Given an audience that does not particularly care about the "details" of an oral performance, beyond the level of assimilating the subject matter information contained in it and enjoying the telling of it, I think their approach works. Jansen (1975) points out that a legitimate goal for the written version of oral tales is to try to create the same reaction in their readers that the oral telling created in its listeners. The transcriber must keep in mind, however, that what sounds perfectly natural to listeners may be jarring to the reader who encounters it on the page. Thus an attempt at a verbatim transcript, with all the grammatical inconsistencies, "topic associating"[4] organizational style, and false starts characteristic of speech, may invoke a negative reaction toward the teller and/or the tale in a reader untrained or unused to seeing speech rendered nearly verbatim in print.

Following this line of reasoning, I produced in Appendix C a transcript of the "Grandma's Death" story that has been edited to 1) change most nonstandard forms into their standard equivalents, e.g., "come" used for past tense has been rendered as "came"; and 2) provide some background context which is not explicitly stated in the oral version, but which is necessary to the understanding of the story, e.g., reference to people by name is first preceded by their relationship to the speaker, as in "my wife, Edith".

I chose this treatment for this particular story because I felt that the story line and my grandfather's religious philosophy were of primary importance here, and I wanted them to come through clearly to the reader. I did not reorganize the sequence of the narrative, although I did put it in a form that I hope will aid its coherence for the reader, as I will discuss later. In this case, the extralinguistic features of the oral telling did not seem to convey anything not communicated by the words alone, and there was no audience feedback during the telling. Also, I feel that the rendering of this story in "dialect" would have given it a comic tone inappropriate to the seriousness of the subject and my grandfather's manner in telling it. Therefore, I did not attempt to represent extralinguistic features, audience feedback or dialect in the written transcript.

On the other hand a linguist interested in recording and studying the features of a dialect or in analyzing the discourse features of the genre of oral narrative would want to preserve the exact language, including pauses, false starts, repetition, and repairs, as well as the para- and extralinguistic behaviors captured in an audio or video recording but left out of Appendix C. For that reason, the transcripts in Appendices A and B are an attempt to give a fuller account of the oral narrative. Appendix A ("The Old Days") follows the conventions developed by Ochs (1979), and Appendix B utilizes some of Ochs' conventions while employing a somewhat different format. In both transcripts I have tried to integrate linguistic and extralinguistic behaviors and have given some indication of dialect as well. Appendix A tries to capture both the syntactic and some of the pronunciation features of my grandfather's speech, while Appendix B represents only the syntactic features peculiar to his dialect.

Although it is difficult to decide what to include in a transcript, I found it even more challenging to decide how to represent the material once I selected it. Again, these decisions must be related to the final purpose of and audience for the transcript, as well as to characteristics of the material itself.

The first and most obvious decision relates to the organization or layout of the written text on the page. Ochs (1979) discusses some important considerations concerning our spatial biases as readers to the relative positioning of text. Although Ochs is concerned with the transcription of child discourse, her observations about our top-to-bottom and left-to-right orientation to print have relevance for the transcription of adult narratives as well.

The placement of nonverbal behaviors in relation to the verbal transcript is problematic in terms of integrating the two visually as closely as they are united in oral performance. In fact, it is impossible to unite these two elements, because although speech and gesture can cooccur, the reader cannot read both the speaker's words and an explanation of his/her gestures at exactly the same moment. Ochs mentions that many

scholars working with transcripts of adult speech behavior consider nonverbal behavior as either secondary or irrelevant to the language itself. Although I think that there are situations in which the language of the adult speaker is sufficient to convey the meaning or message intended (see Appendix C, for example), there are other occasions on which a description of extralinguistic features serves to enrich and clarify the verbal transcript. For example, the indications of laughter in the transcript of the "Beer Story" (Appendix A, lines 27 through 33) show not only that my grandfather considers this to be a funny story, but may also indicate what particular points in the story he finds funny, or at what points he expects his audience to be amused, or at what points in the telling he begins to anticipate the "punchline". Likewise, the nonverbal behavior noted in lines 57/58 and 63 in Appendix B serve to clarify the verbal description he is giving of the construction of a particular kind of fence.

The dilemma I have tried to resolve regarding the placing of the nonverbal behavior in relation to the verbal can be seen in Appendices A and B. Appendix A follows Ochs' format of listing nonverbal behaviors in a separate column from, but next to, cooccurring verbal behavior. Superscripts are used to pinpoint the exact location or occurrence of the nonverbal behavior in the verbal transcript. Although this gives perhaps the most accurate indication of the timing of the nonverbal vis-a-vis the verbal, the fact that the two are listed in different columns still makes them seem rather unconnected. As a reader, my eye keeps going back to that lefthand "nonverbal" column, and it takes more than one reading to insert the nonverbal easily into the context of the "verbal" column.

With Appendix B I have tried to overcome this problem of separation by doing away with the two-column format. Nonverbal behavior was bracketed and inserted in the verbal data following the utterance(s) to which it relates. The problem with this method is that it does not allow for a) easy representation of the exact timing of nonverbal behavior that begins in the middle of a word or sentence or b) the continuation of behavior over the

course of several utterances. Perhaps the timing issue could be surmounted by drawing a wavy line under the verbal transcript to indicate starting and ending points for a particular behavior which is then explained in brackets at the end of the section of discourse involved. Lines 48 to 53 of Appendix A might look as follows:

> (The numbers in parentheses represent length in seconds of pauses in storyteller's speech. Equal signs, "=", indicate no pause or gap betweeen utterances. Both conventions follow Ochs 1979.)
>
> He said well that wasn't the beer that done that now=
> =he said that was my idea. (1) jump-jumpin on him. (3)
> Oh all kinda crazy things like (4) I get to laughin' about
> them things (3) and I can't help it. [laughing]

A second area of concern regarding spatial organization of the transcript has to do with the amount of textual or "literate" structure imposed on the data. Some oral narratives have been represented as one long "string" of writing, a giant paragraph, if you will (cf. Performances 3 and 4 of the 'Gizo' tales taken from Hausa Folk-lore, Customs, Proverbs, by Rattray: 1969). Other narratives have been organized into a number of paragraphs or at least lines separated by blank spaces. Hymes (1977) has worked with transcribing American Indian narratives in free verse format.

In choosing a format or layout for transcription one does not want to impose a structure on the narrative that is not present or not apparent in the oral version. One of the features of the written word is that the reader can constantly look back at what has come before to help him maintain a sense of continuity in the text (Ong 1982: 39). In this phase of the transcribing, it is possible that Jansen's (1973) goal of recreating the oral experience for the reader in print may conflict with the desire of the transcriber to remain true to the original structure of the oral narrative. I confronted this dilemma when working with both "Grandma's Death", on which I decided to impose more of a spatially divided structure than on the other stories, and "The Old Days", in which I tried to make the visual organization parallel the oral experience.

I chose to present the "Grandma's Death" story in a fairly "literate" style, organizing the material into sections with spaces between them to indicate a change or development in the storyline, and indenting the lines of reported speech to indicate a change in speakers within each section. Although in that sense I have imposed an artificial structure on this narrative, it still seems to capture the feel of the oral version. At first telling and on tape, this story sounds direct and coherent. It progresses logically, with pauses, rhythm of speech and intonation contours indicating the structure that has been replicated in writing with spacing and indentation.

However, if I were to have used this kind of format for the text of Appendix B, I would have drastically changed the effect this narrative produced when performed orally. To divide "The Old Days" into lines and paragraphs would make it seem much more explicitly thematic and tightly organized than the oral version seems to be. When Granddaddy was telling this part of his story, the listeners felt he was rambling, "topic associating", if you will. In fact, the entire course of "The Old Days" continues for another 70 or 80 measures on the tape counter beyond what is transcribed in Appendix B. I tried to duplicate the stream-of-consciousness feel of this narrative by presenting it in a sort of "seamless" or run-on form. There was also a fair amount of audience feedback on this portion of the tape, which served to punctuate and sometimes interrupt the telling of the story. For this reason, I placed the listeners' utterances in the same column of print as those of the narrator, so that visually they would break up or intrude into the narration as they do audibly on the tape. Audible audience feedback, with one exception, did not occur in either of the other two passages transcribed (Appendices A and C), which is why I made no provision for speakers other than the narrator in the transcripts of those two passages.

The last major decision I had to make in transcribing these narratives concerned the choice of orthography. My grandfather speaks a variety of Appalachian dialect, and that dialect is a very salient feature of his storytelling. How could I capture the "flavor" of his speech, to use the Foxfire term for it?

One approach would be to make a phonetic transcription of the data. Such a transcription would provide the most exact and complete rendering of the dialect for someone who wished to study it. However, not only am I not qualified to do phonetic transcription, the resulting transcript would be unintelligible to those readers not versed in phonetics.

Casting aside the phonetic transcription, then, a second possibility would be to take an approach similar to that used by the Foxfire publications: what I call the "phonics" approach to dialect transcription. In this method, sound-spelling correspondences in the regular alphabet are employed to approximate the pronunciation and syntax of the dialect speaker.

I encountered several problems with this approach to orthography, which I attempted to apply in Appendix A. First, as both Wigginton (Foxfire 1983: xxxvi) and Jansen (1975: 83) caution, too strict an adherence to the "spelling the way it sounds" method can make the narrator's speech look "illiterate" or like that of a comic strip character--"too Dogpatch", to use Wigginton's term. I wanted to capture the charm and humor of my grandfather's speech in the written transcript, but not to evoke a negative reaction toward him on the part of the reader. Furthermore, it is difficult once you start using the phonics approach to know where to stop: what constitutes making the dialect look "too Dogpatch" or too difficult to read? I dropped the "g" off the progressive form of the verb and the "th" off "them", but could not bring myself to write "jest" for "just". All the decisions I made regarding spelling in Appendix A were very personal and arbitrary on my part, and the "phonics" method was not particularly satisfactory or easy to use.

The other major objection I have to the "phonics" approach is that, despite its goal of portraying the dialect as heard in the oral rendition of the narrative, it does not really succeed in capturing the dialect for the uninitiated reader. When I read the transcripts I can "hear" my grandfather's voice; I am familiar with his accent and style of speech and can recreate them from the renderings given in all three appendices. However, I doubt

that a reader not familiar with his dialect would be able to "hear" it , as the phonics approach purports to make possible. In addition, to represent all the features of the dialect in the orthography takes the transcript so far from the standard for written text, that it makes it almost impossible to read.

For that reason, I prefer one of two compromise approaches. In Appendix B, I did away with all attempts to represent peculiarities of pronunciation in the orthography and used conventional spelling for all words. However, I did try to remain true to the syntax of the speech, which means I kept forms such as "them days", "we went barefooted", and "there wasn't no nothing". For my own personal use I like this representation because it preserves the way my grandfather speaks, yet it does not interfere with my reading. Too many of the odd spellings in Appendix A require sounding out, whereas I can supply the pronunciation for myself from memory while reading Appendix B.

On the other hand, a reader unfamiliar with my grandfather's storytelling style might still get a bad impression of his communicative skills from Appendix B, due both to the "nonstandard" grammar and the interrupted, repetitious, unedited quality of the speech in this transcript. To address these problems, I have developed the kind of transcript seen in Appendix C. In this version, I have done away with all false starts, self-interruptions and other characteristics of speech that are foreign to written communication. I have also changed all nonstandard forms into their standard English equivalents. (Although here I must say I could not bring myself to change "fellers" in the next to last section to "fellows", which seemed too alien and artificial to use in its place.) I did not reorganize the order of events in the story and tried to stay as close as possible to the wording of the oral version, inserting explanatory phrases only where references were unclear. I think the narrative reads much better without the "uhs" and "ums" found in Appendices A and B. And despite the standardization of the syntax, I think the passage still has the feel of an oral performance because of the way it is worded and the way its

content is organized. It is interesting to note that it is not necessary to write "in dialect" to create the feel of orality in a written text.

The transcription format used in Appendix C is the one I plan to use for eventually preserving most of my grandfather's stories "for posterity". Family members of future generations will not remember my grandfather or his charming way of telling stories, nor will they be able to divine his accent from merely reading it on the printed page. They will be most concerned with the information about his life and family contained in the narratives. Therefore, I want to capture that material in a form that will retain as much of the oral style of the original telling as possible, without making the text daunting or difficult to read.

However, as a first stage of the transcription process and for my own use as a student of language and communication, a transcript closer to that in Appendix B is preferable. In order to make more informed or accurate editorial decisions about the material, I will want to have as many of the prosodic qualities and nonverbal behaviors of the performance marked as possible, as well as some indication of the syntax of the dialect. These features are integral to the meaning and effect of the oral performance and must be reflected in some fashion in the final written version, whether it is by means of punctuation, typeface, or explanation. This "richer" kind of transcript is also more appropriate for the study of speech and oral performance, a field of inquiry which I may wish to pursue with my grandfather.

As an afterthought to this discussion, I asked my grandfather what he thought of the transcriptions I had made of his tapes. Of Appendices A and B he could make neither "heads nor tails", Appendix C was "sure a nice story", but, in the final analysis, he told me:

"You know, sweetheart, I'd rather hear a man tell a good story anyday than to try and read one".

1 This paper was prepared for Dr. Clifford Hill's course, "Social and Historical Perspectives on Literacy".

2 My grandfather's storytelling style exhibits such characteristics of "primary orality", as described by Ong, as the use of formulaic expressions, the choice of topics which focus on the everyday struggle for existence, and additive rather than subordinative structure. For more information see Ong 1982, Chapter 3.

3 See Bright 1981 for a discussion of this. He points out, for example, that we cannot be aware of all the dynamics of sound involved in oral communication.

4 In a topic associating style as opposed to topic-centered or topic-focussed the storyteller moves among topics which may not appear to the listener to be related.

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APPENDIX A*

(THE BEER STORY)

Name: Dell Adams Date: 11/8/86 Tape No.: 1 Side: A

Line	Nonverbal	Verbal
1	[1]((exhales))	Poppy give em a little ole(.)[1] uh frame
2		buildin there. And they had school in
3		that.
4		And they didn't get uh wadn't no school
5		teachers there just somebody to hold the
6		kids together you know and (.) keep em
7		out of trouble and so on.
8		They get to fightin with each other you
9		know and all that stuff=Like one (.) one
10		uh (.) guy they (.) he was fightin with
11		another feller on the street.
12		They called it a street=it was just an
13		old mud road.
14	[2]((exhales))	An (.)[2] he knocked him down, one one
15		knocked the other un down,
16		An uh (.) they used to make some'n
17		like a cu- they called it home brew
18		you know but it was a some kind of a
19		beer they made.
20		[N: Uh huh=]**
21	[3]((exhales))	=An uh (2)[3] when they when they taken
22		this fella in the (.) the old constable=
23		=there wadn't no sheriff them days it
24		was a co:nstable.
25		And this constable arrested this feller
26		and taken him over to the (.) j-justice
27	[4]((lf))	of peace a-[4]and tried him over there.
28		And this man was actin as the justice of
29		peace, he (.) he said what (.) what you
30		want to get (.) fightin out there in the
31		public for?
32		In ah out there in the- everybody passin
33		by an seein you like it was on a (.)
34		good paved road and all that stuff
35		y'know.
36		An (.) he said well um they just kept
37		arguin and arguin and said one got the
38		best of the other n said n I just got
39		up and knocked him down.
40		(1.5) An he said what d'you do that for?
41		Said well I don't know he said it it
42	[5]((lf))	must a been the beer I was drinkin.[5]
43		Man says (.) says well I'm gonna fine
44		that beer, for hittin that man and

APPENDIX A - The Beer Story (con.)

Line	Nonverbal	Verbal
45		knockin him down.
46	^{6}((lf))	He said I jumped on him a-after that.^{6}
47		He said what d'you jump on him for?
48		He said well that wasn't the beer that
49		done that now=he said that was my idea.^{6}
50	((lf -	^{6}(1) jump-jumpin on him. (3)
51	sust.))	Oh all kinda] crazy things ^{6}like (4)
52		I get to laughin about them things
53		(3)] and I can't help it.

[Tape counter 221-253]

* Conventions follow Ochs 1979.
  Superscript indicates location of nonverbal behavior in verbal transcript.
  End bracket (]) indicates end of sustained behavior begun at superscript.

** Audience feedback - only instance audible on tape.

APPENDIX B*

THE OLD DAYS

Name: Dell Adams Date: 11/8/86 Tape No.: 1 Side: A
Tape Counter: 009-154

D: Dell Adams S: Stuart Spinner N: Nora Lewis

Line

1 D: Ye::sir buddy (2) //tha]

2 S: //What were] you saying about when you were a kid?

3 D: Fifty-fifty and sixty and seventy years ago (1) uh (.)
4 things were different (3) and uh (.) we had to share
5 with uh (.) the the older ones (.) the little ones had
6 take the clothes from the-the handmedowns you know
7 what they call the handme downs=

8 N: =uh huh.

9 D: After the li-the uh older kids wen-wore their clothes
10 and everything, then they'd hand them down to the next
11 one and just keep on doing that as long as they lasted
12 but (.) but back in them days [h] they didn't have the
13 money to to spare like they did today, to buy things.
14 And (.) we had to go barefoot as soon as the weather
15 warmed up so we could, say in in April, and May. They
16 didn't buy shoes for us in the summertime. A-all of us
17 went barefoot. And then we went barefooted until the
18 frost got uh on the ground. Of course when the ground
19 started to freeze why then we had to put on shoes
20 because (2)[-h] that frozen ground would cut your feet.
21 [h] But our feet was tough enough till we could (.)
22 almost go through a briar patch and not get scratched.
23 //((lf))

24 N: //That's pretty tough!]

25 D: Like] like some of them m-my my daddy would say we m-my
26 (buh) (.) boy when I was growing up said I could (cheh)
27 crack a chestnut burr with my heels and never never get
28 uh (.) a one of them thorns in my heels and said I was
29 my feet was that tough. And the only roads we had was
30 in the creeks in the creek beds. An-and we went with
31 the streams you know, wherever the streams went why
32 that's the way we went (.) cause the the mountains just
33 come right down to the to where the streams was. And
34 there wasn't no uh no no automobiles, there wasn't no
35 nothing. You just got on a mule and rode.

APPENDIX B - The Old Days (con.)

Line		
36	N:	Mmhmm=
37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46	D:	=If you-that's the transportation you had or either your foot, (.) walked. And the roads we ha:d (.) when the creeks was up was uh the sheep paths and the hog paths where the hogs made a little path around the side of the mountain you know. And (.) you'd follow that (1) and uh (.) the cows. But no:w, back there at home, and everywhere, it don't it looks like you's in a jungle somewhere. The creeks if a::ll dried up and uh and uh the bushes growing in the right down in the streams and //where the streams]
47 48	N:	//And it] didn't look like that when you were growing up?
49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58	D:	No:::? no! They wasn't no bushes down in there. And they wasn't no (.) uh [h] no (3) well I don't know what it was. I I ju-it was just uh (1) a different world. It was a different world then. There wasn't no fences. People didn't have (.) no money to build fence with and we had to split rails you know and make an old rail fence. And they called it a worm rail fence. And and worm like a worm crawl this way and then crawl that way and crawl this way [crossing index fingers diagonally to show how fence was constructed]=
59	N:	=Uh huh=
60 61 62 63 64	D:	And tha-that's the way and and they had to (lah-) uh they didn''t have any wi:re or any nails or any to nail them up with. They had to cross them like that [crosses index fingers] and make them hold each other up.
65	N:	Uh huh.
66 67 68 69 70 71	D:	[h] And uh (.) on the on the sides of them mountains you'd have to (.) cut a (.) jack (.) brace as they called them, and stick it in the ground down there, put it agin the fence up here [gestures with heel of hand and fingertips to indicate brace] to hold it up to keep it from sliding off the mountain //you know,]
72	N:	//Mmhmm]
73	D:	going around the side of them mountains. (1) And that (.) wasn't no saw mills or no (.) wasn't nothing.

APPENDIX B - The Old Days (con.)

Line		
74	D:	It was just like a wild (.) Indian country. And them
75		old Indians you know they had to live too. And in the
76		seventeen hundreds back in old Abe- before Abe ever
77		thought about being a president, (3) Cornwallis and all
78		that stuff you know.
79	N:	//Ummhmm]
80	D:	//And] he he tried that Cornwallis was a great guy you
81		know and he tried to teach the Indians how to plant
82		corn and have corn(.)meal you know, and (.) so on (.)
83		and eat. And uh (2) them Indians (.) they didn't know
84		nothing about (.) raising anything to eat=they lived
85		off the land. (1) And uh (.) you'd think that (.)
86		they would know better than to steal somebody's cow
87		and kill it (1) and eat it. And they thought it was
88		just like a buffalo a wild buffalo or something you
89		know. And uh they steal somebody's cow and that was
90		all the milk and all the food that the maybe the family
91		had (1) is that cow. (2) And them Indians would steal
92		it and kill it (.) and eat it. ((lf)) And then these
93		these guys get up a posse and-you know how many people
94		was in a posse?
95	N:	Mmm//mn]
96	D:	//Three] people. If they could get three people that
97		was a posse and they'd run that Indian down and kill
98		him, (2) And right down below the mouth of Crawly there
99		where that creek where we lived on they called it
100		Crawly Creek?
101	N:	Mmhmm.
102	D:	There was some big rocks down there bigger than this
103		house. [^ ceiling, gestures at walls with arms] And
104		them Indians would go down there and hide in them
105		rocks. And uh and if they tra-traced them down to
106		there and if it was the wintertime and had a snow,
107		in them days when a when a snow come in the fall of
108		the year it stayed until spri:ng. And and stayed on
109		the ground all winter. (2) And they could track them
110		in the wintertime=well them poor old Indians I I ah
111		now I feel sorry for the life they had to live (.)
112		back in them days. (1) Because uh (.) they didn't have
113		nothing. And when the when the white people come in
114		there and taken their land and everything you know,
115		why they had to live. And so they just kept mo:vin

APPENDIX B - The Old Days (con.)

Line		
116	D:	them on mo:vin them on. (2) And uh they'd uh they'd
117		scalp a (.) a (.) white man if he (.) if they's enough
118		of them Indians to get together.
119	N:	Umhmm.
120	D:	They'd uh (.) they'd cut his throat and pull-take his
121		hair off right around there [draws imaginary line
122		around base of scalp with finger] and they'd take his
123		scalp off. ((lf))
124	N:	Did you- did that ever happen to anyone when you were
125		around? I mean,
126	D:	No I- no::? no. They them them Indians had passed on
127		before I //got up (ere).
128	N:	//They were gone by the time] you were ( )
129	D:	Yeah.] See mother and dad was born in eighteen (.)
130		the eighteen hundreds. Both of them was born in in
131		eighteen seventy five.

* Transcription conventions after Ochs 1979.

=	no gap between utterances
(#)	pause length
(.)	very slight pause
//	beginning of overlap between speakers
]	end of overlap
-	self-interruption
,	low-rise intonation contour
?	high rise intonation contour
.	low fall contour
!	exclamatory utterance
__	underscore marks stressed utterance
:	lengthened syllable (1 ":" = 1 "beat")
((LF))	laugh
[-h]	marks in-breath
[h]	marks out-breath
(xx)	tentative reading
^	looks up (+ target)

APPENDIX C

GRANDMA'S DEATH

A lot of times the Devil gets in front of the Lord. And the Lord lets him work on somebody and see what he's doing and then He steps in and takes him back and takes him home with Him or something like that.

Like He told my wife Edith. He came and talked to Edith about it. And after He saw all these doctors working on her and not doing anything for her, He told Edith, "I'm going to come and get you and take you home. These people aren't doing anything for you down here." And sure enough, about a couple of weeks after that he came to see her.

She told me, "You'd better stay close to me."

And I said, "Why?" (We were sitting right there in the living room on the lounge. And I believe our friend Shirley was sitting there.)

She said, "Well, I'm going to leave you."

And I said, "Mommy, where would you go now? In your condition, where would you go? You can't even walk."

She said, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm going."

We kind of passed it off as a joke, you know, or something, like she was out of her head or something.

I got up and said, "Well, I've got to go down to the chicken house and work on that door a little bit."

And she said, "No! Don't you go down there. You stay here with me."

And I could get up and start to the mailbox and she'd say, "Where are you going?"

I'd say, "I'm going to the mailbox."

"Well, don't stay long. Hurry up and come on back."

I said, "Why? Why do you want me to stay so close to you?"

And she said, "Well, I'm going to leave you and I want you to be here when I go."

I said, "Well, I'd like to know how you know you're going somewhere."

And then she just out and told me.

She said, "Well, you heard us talking the other night."

I said, "I heard something that sounded like a man talking, but I didn't know who it was. I didn't hear you talking. I thought you were just lying there listening."

"Well," she said, "I didn't do much talking, but the man was talking. That was the Lord standing there at the foot of the bed talking to me."

After they had stopped talking, I got up and turned the light on and looked all through the downstairs and upstairs and

all around to see if I could find out what it was, if it was a real person or a nightmare or whatever.

And when the Lord came back, he told Edith, "I'm going to take the jobs and the work that you'd been doing until you got so ill and put them on your husband, Dell. And if he needs any help to carry on, whatever it is, I'll come back and help him. All he has to do is ask Me."

Now I found out what He meant by asking Him. He dispatches these people like my granddaughter Nancy and my son-in-law, Al.

Now He didn't tell them to come down here to see us. They just made up their minds to do it, but really He caused them to do it. And they came down here and pulled up in the yard out there. Mommy was lying right there on the lounge and I was sitting here with her.

And I got up and looked out the door and I saw Al and Nancy pulling up and I said, "That's Al and Nancy coming up." I said to Mommy, "Did you know? Did they talk to you on the phone or anything?"

And she said, "No. I didn't know they were coming." And she asked me, "Did you know they were coming?"

I said, "No, they never told me."

But there the Lord sent them down here. Now, they didn't know the Lord was behind that. They didn't know the Lord had told them to do that. They thought they had done that on their own. Which they did. He gave them the knowledge and everything to have that much power to say, "We're going down to Grandma's."

When they came in the door there, they said, "Well, you fellers didn't know we were coming down, but we just thought we'd come down and spend the weekend with you, just to be with you."

And I said, "Well, we're glad you're here. Come on in."

And it went from there to there, and, of course, they stayed, and that's when she passed away.

[from recording of Dell Adams, 11/8/86, Tape 1, Side A, 531-589]